CLAIMS

1.   A method for managing printer component inventories, comprising:

defining one or more printer component rules for one or more printers in a first organization and for one or more printers in a second organization, each printer component rule defining a printer component event that, when it occurs, indicates that the printer component requires replacement;

monitoring printer components in the printers in the first organization and the second organization to detect an occurrence of a printer component event defined by a printer component rule; and

replacing a printer component when a printer component event is detected in a printer.

2.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the replacing the printer component further comprises ordering a replacement component to be shipped to a location of the printer in which the printer component event was detected.

3.   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the replacing the printer component further comprises shipping a replacement component to a location of the printer in which the printer component event was detected.

4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the printer component further comprises a printer component selected from the following list of printer components: toner cartridge; ink cartridge; ribbon cartridge; dry medium cartridge; ink bladder; photoconductor; drum; belt; developer assembly; cleaning roller; oiling roller; transfer assemblies; print head.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the printer component is a toner cartridge for a laser printer; and

the printer component event is a low toner condition in the toner cartridge.

6. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising presenting an interface to the first organization and to the second organization, the interface allowing the first organization and the second organization to define the printer component rules for each respective organization.

7. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein detecting the printer component event further comprises receiving notification from an organization that the printer component event has occurred in one of the printers in the organization.

8. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the monitoring further comprises periodically polling the printer components of the printers in the first and second organizations.

9.   A system for managing printer components in one or more organizations, comprising:

a processor;

memory;

5   connection means for establishing at least one electronic connection with a first organization and at least one electronic connection with a second organization, each organization having at least one printer that includes one or more printer components;

a rules-based printer component management system configured to

10   monitor the printers in the first and second organizations for the occurrence of a printer component event in a printer component, the occurrence of the printer component event indicating that the printer component requires replacement; and

replacing the printer component in which the printer component event

15   occurred.

10.   The system as recited in claim 9, further comprising an order module configured to order a replacement component, and wherein the replacing the printer component further comprises ordering a replacement

20   component to replace the printer component.

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11.   The system as recited in claim 9, further comprising:

a rules table that stores printer events for one or more printers in one or more organizations; and

an interface module configured to present an interface to the one or more organizations, allowing each organization to enter rules in the rules table for the one or more printers of the organization.

12.   The system as recited in claim 9, wherein the connection means further comprises a network interface card that provides a connection with a network.

13.   The system as recited in claim 9, wherein the connection means is a modem that provides a telephone line connection with a computing device.

14.   The system as recited in claim 9, wherein the rules-based printer component management system monitors the printers by periodically polling a status of the printer components in the printers for the occurrence of a printer component event.

15.   The system as recited in claim 9, wherein the rules-based printer component management system monitors the printers by receiving a notification from the printer that a printer component event has occurred.

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16.   The system as recited in claim 9, wherein the rules-based printer component management system monitors the printers by receiving a notification from the first or second organization that a printer component event has occurred in an organization printer.

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17.   One or more computer-readable media containing computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, perform the following steps:

monitoring printer component conditions in one or more printers of
10   more than one organization;

referring to printer component rules defined for the one or more printers to determine if a printer component event has occurred that indicates that a replacement component is required for the printer component in which the printer component event has occurred, the printer component even occurring
15   when printer component conditions satisfy at least one of the printer component rules; and

replacing the printer component that requires replacement with a replacement component.

20   18.   The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 17, wherein replacing the printer component further comprises ordering the replacement component to be shipped to a location of the printer in which the replacement component is required.

19.   The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 17, wherein replacing the printer component further comprises shipping the replacement component to a location of the printer in which the replacement component is required.

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20.   The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 17, further comprising additional computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, perform the following step:

presenting an interface to the organizations allowing each organization
10   to define printer component rules for the printers of the organization.

21.   The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 17, wherein the monitoring printer component conditions further comprises periodically polling the printers to determine the printer component conditions.
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22.   The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 17, wherein the monitoring printer component conditions further comprises receiving notification from an organization when a printer component event has occurred in a printer in the organization.

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